

STATE OF NEBRASKA

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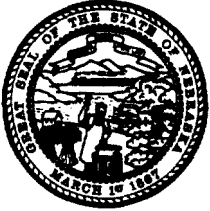
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December 8, 2000

Dear Tim and FCC:

My name is Beth Ellsworth. I am a Field representative with the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and member of SHHH. As a field representative I work with consumers that are hard of hearing and deaf. One of the concerns I deal with the most is amplification for telephones. This is also an issue for me personally as a hard of hearing person. Here at NCDHH we have a demonstration/display area for people to come and try out telephones to see what will work for them. The various telephone companies refer consumers to me when they receive calls from hard of hearing people asking for amplified phones.

Personally, I have struggled with finding the telephone that will work for me. I would love to be able to use a wireless telephone but have not been able to find one that will work for me. I wear two Behind-the-Ear hearing aids and I have yet to find a wireless that is hearing aid compatible. It is my understanding that all telephones are supposed to be hearing aid compatible, however, that has not been my experience. Being able to use a wireless phone would give me a great deal of security. I am envious of those that can use cell phones and are able to have them in their car so if they have any trouble they can call for help. I would like to be able to keep up with technology but as a hard of hearing person I am not able to do this because the technology does not work for those of us with a hearing loss.

I recently wrote an article for our newsletter concerning amplified telephones. I have enclosed a copy for your review in hopes that it is helpful information about the needs of those of us who are hard of hearing.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional information or be of assistance in improving telephones for hard of hearing.

Sincerely,

Beth Ellsworth

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AMPLIFIED PHONES INFORMATION & UPDATE

It is a fact that people who are hard of hearing need to have amplification in order to hear and understand. This is especially true when talking on the phone since visual cues are not present. It is one thing to hear and quite another to understand what is being said. Every person's hearing loss is unique and what works for one person may not work for another. Recently, Beth Ellsworth did some research on amplified phones to address the complexity of choosing a phone.

Clarity W1000

Now has a boost button. The law states that phones must have the capability or option to return to standard loudness. Phones that are amplified return to standard loudness at the termination of each phone call. This means that each time a phone call is made, people who are hard of hearing must push the boost button for volume.

The Panasonic 900 (cordless) is NOT amplified

The following phones have been discontinued in some catalogues because of complaints about static:

Loud- R Phone
FPD- LRC

Loud-R 900 MHz
#FPD-LRC900

The following phones are suggested based on the degree of hearing loss.

Mild hearing loss (25-40 dB):

Walker 1000, traditional amplified phones, or the WS- Phonemax

Moderate hearing loss (40-70 dB):

Walker 1110 (has boost button); Dialogue XL30, Dialogue XL40,
DialogueJV-35 (for people with both hearing vision loss)
900MHz – This is a cordless phone that is compatible with cochlear processors. This was reported to be the best sound quality for cordless phones.

This phone (900MHz) also has two different designs.

One has Caller ID in the handset as well as Call Waiting

Amplified digital cordless (built in headset jack) with Digital Answering Machine (7-Level Volume Control)

For those who would like a Speaker/Cordless phone

Severe hearing loss (70-90 dB):

Dialogue XL 50- (compatible with cochlear processors)

TeleTalker- (has boost button and volume and tone adjuster)

Profound hearing loss (91 dB or more):

Understanding speech is difficult to understand so amplification is no longer helpful. Utilizing the relay, calls can be made and the relay operator will type everything that is spoken. The other option is to use a TTY.

Dialogue VCO

TTY's (there are a variety of different kinds that can be purchased through a vendor or from a catalogue. For more information about what is available contact NCDHH).

If you would like additional information or you have any questions or comments, please contact a Field Representative on Voice or TTY. In Omaha: (402) 595-3991 or 1-877-248-7836 (toll free)
In Lincoln: (402) 471-3593 or 1-800-545-6244 (toll free).